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ABSTRACT

The undergraduate education of teachers--improving their general education, the content of their majors, and the professional education course--must become a priority for more college, university, and state leaders. State-mandated standards have produced some significant changes, but these alone are not sufficient to stimulate all the needed improvements in what and how future teachers are taught. This study shows that little substantive curriculum change has occurred over the last five years, and that all too often college presidents and academic vice presidents have not been actively involved in supporting or promoting change. On those campuses where change is taking place, creative academic leaders are seizing upon state mandates and interest in teacher education as opportunities for change. Arts and sciences and education faculty need to rethink curriulum, and state and campus policies should call for and provide incentives for faculty action. Policies for strengthening teacher education programs should be joint efforts of campus and state leaders because of effects beyond the campus, such as quality and supply of teachers and costs of programs. (AA)

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Is the Education of Teachers Changing?

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Foreword

The undergraduate education of teachers—improving their general education, the content of their majors, and their professional education courses—must become a priority for more college, university, and state leaders. State-mandated standards have produced some significant changes, but these alone are not sufficient to stimulate all the needed improvements in what and how future teachers are taught. This study shows that little substantive curriculum change has occurred over the last five years, and that all too often college presidents and academic vice presidents have not been actively involved in supporting or promoting change. On those campuses where change is taking place, creative academic leaders are seizing upon state mandates and interest in teacher education as opportunities for change.

Arts and sciences and education faculty need to rethink curriculum, and state and campus policies should call for and provide incentives for faculty action. Policies for strengthening teacher education programs should be joint efforts of campus and state leaders because of effects beyond the campus, such as quality and supply of teachers and costs of programs.

Winfred L. Godwin
President

"There is no single issue on which greater coordination between colleges and schools is needed than on how to strengthen teacher education programs."

Southern Regional Education Board, 1981

Teacher education programs are changing—at least some of them. Changes have generally not been dramatic, but some may have significant effects. Substantive changes in what and how prospective teachers are taught may be occurring on too few campuses. Where substantive changes have occurred, they can be traced to state and campus leadership.

Since 1981, all SREB states have strengthened standards for entering teacher education. All SREB states have made certification of new teachers, or re-certification of veteran teachers, more rigorous. About half of the SREB states now use the performance of graduates on certification requirements to determine whether a college can continue to have an "approved" program to prepare teachers.

The new entrance standards, usually mandated by a state board or legislature, have been the most significant change in teacher education in this decade, according to deans of colleges of education in SREB states. There has been less change in the general education, subject matter knowledge, and the content of professional education requirements. SREB's 1983 study comparing the college courses taken by arts and sciences and education graduates provided substantial evidence that all of these areas needed examination.

SREB has attempted to determine: 1) the changes in the education of teachers since 1981, and 2) the roles played by campus leaders and arts and sciences and education faculty in bringing about changes. To assess these changes SREB commissioned a study* that focused on public institutions in the SREB states that prepare teachers. The study surveyed deans of education and deans of arts and sciences (75 percent of the public institutions responded). Case studies at six campuses (Middle Tennessee State University, Murray State University in Kentucky, Mississippi State University, Norfolk State University in Virginia, the University of Florida, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro) focused on the role of presidents, academic leaders, and faculty in examining campus leadership and the conditions that support or impede change.

* Hawley, W. D.; Austin, A. E.; Goldman, E. S. *Changing the Education of Teachers.* Atlanta, Georgia: Southern Regional Education Board, 1988.

Changes in the Way Teachers Are Educated

- Increasing the standards for entry into teacher education programs is the most common change being made in the education of teachers.
- Deans see the changes in the standards for admission to and exit from teacher education programs as the most significant. The most widespread changes have been increased grade point average requirements and the introduction of minimum score requirements on standardized tests.
- Teacher education programs are now more selective. Half of the colleges and universities reported that they are accepting a lower proportion of applicants.
- The pace of change, such as rethinking curricula, in teacher education programs is accelerating in most states and institutions, but demands for change have not been accompanied by needed resources.
- More institutions reported increases—than reported decreases—in the number of graduates preparing for elementary and middle school teaching. Forty percent produced more secondary teachers; 44 percent saw decreases. Over half of the institutions had fewer special education graduates.
- Enrollment in teacher education appears to be increasing, but the number of minority students in the programs is declining. Only 22 percent of the colleges and universities reported increased enrollments of nonwhite students, while 44 percent reported declines.
- The introduction of written tests to screen applicants for teacher education and certification appears to have had little impact on the curricula of the colleges and universities, except at historically black institutions.
- Performance evaluations during the first year of teaching have influenced the curricula of the teacher education programs in states with evaluations.
- There is a decided trend to increase the number of general education courses required for all types of certification. Institutions also seem to be increasing the number of professional courses required (more recently, some states are limiting education courses); most of the increases apparently involve the addition of courses requiring experience in schools.

- Sixty-four percent of the responding institutions reported they had increased requirements for school classroom experiences for their students; only two percent reported decreases.
- Little effort has been made in most colleges and universities to explicitly link the content and process of courses in the liberal arts, including academic majors, with courses in education.
- About two-thirds of the colleges and universities require students who seek certification in secondary school teaching to major in a subject other than education. Few colleges and universities in the SREB states now require a major other than education for students planning to teach in elementary or middle schools.
- Efforts to integrate and coordinate arts and sciences and education are due more to the efforts of individual faculty members teaching specific courses than they are to institutional commitment, except at some historically black colleges and universities.
- Faculty and administrators in the arts and sciences are less critical of the teacher education curricula than one might expect from reading published criticisms of teacher education.
- SREB states thus far have not mandated programs requiring a post-baccalaureate year of preparation prior to entry to teaching and have supported reform within four-year programs.

Key Conditions for Change

"College presidents should provide leadership to improve teacher education programs."

Southern Regional Education Board, 1983

"Teacher education, which has not been a priority for many state and education leaders, demands immediate attention."

Southern Regional Education Board, 1987

External mandates from the states are necessary, but are not sufficient by themselves to stimulate effective change on the campus. The information provided in the surveys of the arts and sciences and education deans, and particularly from the case studies at institutions where substantive change seems to have occurred, indicates that a state mandate, a general societal concern, an energetic leader, or a group of faculty, taken alone, seldom ensures substantive or permanent change. Moreover, external mandates that focus only on one aspect of the education of teachers seem to have little substantive effect on the instruction and overall curriculum for prospective teachers.

Successful change does require involvement by campus leaders. Curricular changes, if substantive, take time and usually evoke tension, and sometimes conflict. Creative academic leaders in the colleges and universities are seizing upon state mandates and the general interest in teacher education on the part of state and national leaders as opportunities for change. Efforts are more likely to be successful when a number of critical conditions are present in planning, formulating, and implementing change.

State Policy and the Response of Colleges and Universities

The most important conditions outside of the institutions that influence changes in teacher education appear to be state policies, professional trends, pressure from organized interest groups, demographic changes, and public opinion as it is reflected in the media. Among these conditions, however, state policy sets the context for change in most institutions. It appears that states are more sensitive to pressures for reform than are most institutions, and institutional change most frequently has come in response to, or in anticipation of, changes in state policy.

Colleges and universities have reacted quite differently to similar external pressures. In some instances the pressures seem to have simply placed added strain on already beleaguered colleges of education; in others, the demands were recast by campus leaders as "opportunities." At the

University of Florida, for example, where declining enrollments coupled with pending changes in state certification policy made some kind of action mandatory, major program revision resulted. The Mississippi law that required competency-based evaluation for teacher certification as of 1988 served as the catalyst for Mississippi State University to continue a thorough examination of its teacher education program. At Norfolk State University in Virginia, changes are being influenced substantially by a decision of a state task force on education that students preparing to teach take a maximum of 18 hours in education (not including field-based courses), complete a bachelor's degree in an arts and sciences discipline, and pass the National Teacher Examinations (NTE) before being certified.

In Tennessee and Kentucky, changes thus far have been influenced more by general state and national reform movements than by state policies specifically relating to teacher preparation. At Murray State University in Kentucky, the national concern about the relationship between educational quality and economic well-being was a major influence. At both Murray State and Middle Tennessee State University, concern within professional teacher education associations, such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the national movement for research-based school improvement, led to changes in entry and exit requirements and curriculum changes.

Leaders Define Problems

Whether the change process begins simultaneously with, or in direct response to, external mandates, successful change that goes beyond superficial response seems to occur when institutional leaders: 1) broadly define a problem that invites solution, and 2) clearly communicate their perceptions to others to encourage interest and involvement. At Norfolk State, for example, the dean of education anticipated the increasing imbalance between the number of black children in school and the number of black young adults interested in teaching as a career. From meetings with university faculty a shared perception emerged that led to a deeper effort to grapple with an institutional and national problem. At Murray State, the president identified the status of the college of education within the institution as a problem and linked its improvement to the role of the university in strengthening the economic and social well-being of the region within the state.

In some cases, a small group of faculty came together to initiate specific proposals or to build upon changes introduced at an earlier time. For example, at Middle Tennessee State, faculty members active in the effective schools movement at the national level led an effort to include relevant content in the teacher education curriculum and another faculty group used the presence of an affiliated public school to link school-based training more closely with other elements in the curriculum.

Education of Teachers as a Priority

An active and assertive stance by college and university leaders would seem to be a critical factor in bringing about a substantive improvement in teacher education. However, the evidence from the SREB study suggests that most college and university leaders (presidents and academic vice presidents) have spent little of their time or influence on efforts to change the ways teachers are educated. Only about one of six deans (at 29 of the 161 institutions) identified even one change that had occurred in teacher education because of an initiative of the central administration. Of the few initiatives that were cited, most were changes that affected all students, usually revised general education requirements. Thus, it seems fair to say that on the campus the initiation of significant efforts to improve the education of teachers usually has been left to teacher educators. The SREB survey indicates that deans of arts and sciences and of education do not believe that most university presidents and vice presidents have much interest in improving the education of teachers. Few presidents and vice presidents appear to have been very visible or vocal on the issue. Murray State provides a clear counter-example. There the president and vice president even participated in the faculty retreat that initiated the change process.

Most frequently, the education dean was at the center of efforts to change teacher education. All too often the dean of education was likely to be the only formal campus leader promoting change. In only a few cases were leaders in arts and sciences involved in substantive ways. The level of involvement of liberal arts faculty and administrators appears to be related to the institutional priority given to teacher education.

Three of the SREB state institutions visited provided pertinent examples. At the University of Florida, the education dean secured political, community, and institutional support for reform. Although pending changes in state requirements and declining enrollments undoubtedly set the stage for changes, the dean's awareness and promotion of national reform issues appear to have been key factors in gaining faculty commitment and involvement. The new president at Murray State decided that the school of education should be rejuvenated. She appointed a new education dean with national stature. The dean used the central administration's priorities to engage deans in other fields in efforts to bring about a comprehensive change in the education of teachers. For years the education dean at Norfolk State has used her authority and position to encourage change. Almost a decade ago, she enlisted the help of the university president in a sustained effort to make the preparation and retention of black teachers a university-wide priority.

Colleges and Universities Must Make Commitments to Change

Effective, permanent change requires the commitment of resources in the form of time, competence, and sometimes money. The level and balance among these resources will differ, but each must be considered.

An institution that wants to make substantive change must be willing to reallocate the time of some of its faculty and administrators. This may have to be done even when faculty positions are being lost to enrollment declines, as was reported by most institutions in SREB states during the 1970s and early 1980s. Typically, years of effort are needed to overhaul a college curriculum. At Mississippi State, for example, a 10-member task force invested many hours in a year-long series of meetings to design a new teacher education curriculum. The work of the task force capped efforts to bring about change that took place over a 4- to 5-year period. While implementation has begun, some areas are still being designed, requiring still more faculty time.

Moreover, reform efforts will not be successful if personnel with necessary experience and abilities are not in place. Do the faculty and administrators have the knowledge and skills to carry out the changes or, at least, the appropriate backgrounds for acquiring the necessary competencies? What resources are available to develop new skills or knowledge among the faculty or to add new faculty? These questions were found to be especially important at the institutions visited when the changes involved using new technologies and techniques in the curriculum. Few institutions or states have taken seriously the need to provide new learning opportunities for faculty. Among the SREB states, North Carolina is providing significant funds to institutions of higher education to provide faculty development programs for teacher educators.

Planners for change should be realistic about the equipment or additional financial resources that will be needed: 1) financing faculty time to plan, learn new things, and implement and evaluate the changes, 2) new equipment and facilities, especially those related to the use of electronic technology, and 3) staffing for remedial programs for students.

Incentives

Appropriate incentives for the faculty are linked to the success of efforts to change teacher education programs. For example, Mississippi State undertook a major restructuring of the teacher education program that involved the time-consuming task of creating new core courses. Faculty resistance to the extra effort needed was minimized, however, because the university task force and dean conveyed to the faculty and university at large a sense that invitation and selection to plan and teach the new courses meant honor, prestige, and respect for the faculty member.

An incentive that attracted some faculty at most of the institutions visited was the opportunity to have key roles in identifying problems and solutions and in making significant decisions. The faculty thereby developed a sense of ownership of the change plan, even when it was different from their own original predispositions.

The prospect of raising the status of the organization of which one is a part can be a powerful incentive. At Murray State, for example, statements and actions of administrators helped convince the faculty that assertive action on their part would lead to a restoration of the status of the school of education within the university. Still another incentive is the prospect that one can,

by changing, become more effective professionally. This seems to have been a factor in the willingness of several faculties to incorporate current research into their curricula. In other words, teacher educators want to educate effective teachers, and if change can be tied to producing better teachers, faculty will be motivated. At Middle Tennessee State and the University of Florida, for example, faculty committees reviewed the research literature and identified a knowledge base that they deemed to be valid. Faculty opponents of the proposals found it difficult to challenge the changes.

Feedback on one's performance also can be an important motivator for change when the performance evaluation is seen as valid. At Murray State, an effort is underway to develop measures of performance that the faculty will see as legitimate, and faculty with expertise in evaluation are being given time to help their colleagues develop and assess the measures.

The elimination of disincentives seems to have received special attention at the universities visited. At the University of Florida, the college of education was assured that it would not be penalized for fluctuation in enrollment as changes were implemented. At Mississippi State, the faculty were told that time spent on planning and implementing teacher education changes would not have a negative effect on progress toward tenure and promotion. The dean of education at Norfolk State held back on filling some openings in order to have more flexibility when the changes began and to assure current faculty that their positions would not be terminated.

However, losing one's job seemed to be of less concern to faculty than the prospect of losing a central role in a program, or of having the subject one teaches diminished in importance, or of being expected to change the way one teaches. These concerns have not been a major impediment to change in the SREB states thus far. Few institutions have demanded that courses be cut, and changes in instructional practices have not been a major focus of change. In the last two years, however, states have begun to require academic majors for all teachers (North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia) and place specific limits on the credit hours that can be required in education courses (Texas and Virginia). In the future such actions will have a major effect on the curricula in these states.

Workable Organizational Structures

Effective changes appeared to be related to the existence or creation of organizational structures that cultivated a sense of ownership. Some form of institutional governance structure existed to broaden involvement in decision making and to plan and initiate the changes. These structures and their membership differed, but they all provided faculty a role in the change process and had administrative support.

For example, at Murray State and Middle Tennessee State, the structures for change emphasized broad participation. After a faculty retreat at Murray State, 11 committees were formed that included arts and sciences representatives in addition to the broad involvement of the

education faculty. A detailed strategy for the future of teacher education at Murray State emerged from these committees. At Middle Tennessee State, changes have developed out of the work of various subcommittees of the faculty. These committees worked on parts of the curriculum separately, rather than as parts of one large, coordinated effort.

The organizational structure at Mississippi State and the University of Florida initially did not include such large numbers of faculty. At Mississippi State, the dean of education appointed a task force of respected faculty within the college to examine and propose revisions in the teacher education program. The task force was careful to seek the ideas of a wide range of faculty and to keep the faculty of the college informed, but intensive planning was carried out by the task force. On the other hand, the planning committee of teacher educators appointed by the dean of education at the University of Florida planned the changes in detail before they were brought to the full faculty.

One of the reasons so little institution-wide change has occurred appears to be that effective structures for bringing about change across colleges or schools within institutions seldom exist. On the surface, intra-school councils on teacher education would appear to be appropriate structures, but in reality they seldom serve this purpose. Their members usually are chosen for reasons other than commitment to change or reform, and the councils seldom enjoy the active support of central administrators.

Building on an Institution's Culture or Traditions

Where the change process has been most effective, institutional leaders have presented the change effort as building on, rather than departing from, the historical background of the college or university. At Norfolk State, the extensive changes (including a non-education-based teaching major and university-wide involvement in preparing students for the NTE) were couched in the context of the long-standing institutional commitment to preparing black teachers. At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the development of academic specializations for middle school certification was presented as consistent with the university's origin as the state women's college with a strong liberal arts focus and a tradition of excellence in the education of teachers. At Murray State, the president generated support for institution-wide improvements by calling on the university's traditions and strong reputation in the region for preparing good teachers. All of the universities fostered a sense that the changes related to the institution's mission through the judicious placement of respected senior faculty members on planning committees.

Increasing the Prospects for Change

The first response to external pressures by many teacher educators was defensive and tentative, but faculty committees almost everywhere have become engaged to some extent in curricular reform. The pace of change appears to be accelerating, but how comprehensive, extensive or effective the results will be remains to be seen.

The data from the SREB study, however, provide some clues to strategies for bringing about change in the education of teachers. The inferences drawn by the authors of the study and the generalizations made may be helpful to those who seek to alter the ways teachers are educated.

1. **Fewer Resources Do Not Necessarily Lead to Change**
   Teacher education programs can lose enrollment, faculty, and money and still not make significant changes. The loss of resources may even become the explanation for why improvements cannot be undertaken. When the teacher education program is either a major source of the institution's revenue or an important part of its identity, institution-wide support for change efforts are more likely.

2. **External Pressures Do Not Explain the Magnitude of Change**
   The extent of external pressures for reform is not a good predictor of the degree of change in an institution. Whether the institution goes beyond minimal compliance depends upon the presence of leaders who see pressure as opportunity, a competent faculty, and organizational structures that facilitate change.

3. **Successful Implementation Requires Top-Level Involvement**
   Top-level leaders must be involved in proposed changes, especially when change may have to be implemented by those who were opposed to the plan. The more the plan requires new behavior, the more the continuing involvement of the institution's formal and informal leaders is required. Too often, central administrators believe that their role in fostering change is to announce their commitment and then return to the sidelines to participate from time to time in response to infrequent requests for assistance.

4. **Change Can Be Substantive or Symbolic**
   The greater the depth and breadth of the substantive changes being proposed, the more likely that conflict will arise. Leaders may be lured to introduce simple changes that are essentially symbolic. These cosmetic efforts may sap the energy of the faculty and fail to convince them that the change effort will make much difference.

5. **Planned Changes Must Include the Entire Institution**
   Most institutions can appear to respond to change efforts without really changing—that is, they change only enough to relieve pressure. Effective, substantive change is more likely if the entire institution is actively engaged. While institution-wide commitment is essential, schools and departments of education cannot generate that commitment without the active support of the central administrators. These administrators can set or influence institutional priorities and provide incentives.

6. **Change Will Not Exceed the Competence of Those Being Asked to Change**
   One of the surest ways to ensure failure of change efforts is to ask people to do something they do not know how to do. Redirection of resources may be needed to ensure that people have the skills for the tasks. This problem is aggravated by the fact that faculty are considered "experts" and thus are reluctant to seek assistance that might undermine others' views of their expertise.

7. **The Absence of Outcome Measures Limits Incentives to Change**
   One of the most serious constraints on change is the absence of sophisticated measures of what students have learned and are able to do as a result of their entire college experience. The addition of state-imposed outcome measures (especially written tests) to assess teacher education graduates has affected those programs, but not those of the larger institution (except in historically black institutions) because only the specific teacher education program is given notice that it will be terminated if improvement does not occur. The failure of students on these tests usually is seen as a failure of the teacher education program. This reduces the prospects for institution-wide change by diminishing the status of the teacher education unit while others (such as arts and sciences faculty) accept no blame.

8. **Effective Leaders Draw Upon Several Sources of Influence**
   Leaders within a college or department of education are more likely to forge a consensus for change if they have standing and recognition outside the teacher education program. The most obvious source of external influence is a dean or department chair's perceived influence with other university administrators, especially the president and chief academic officer. The reputation of a dean as a strong leader with national credentials is also a source of support. Influence is greater when the deans are perceived to: have access to knowledge that allows them to see emerging trends, possess a command of the relevant research, or are able to assess the relative costs and benefits of alternative solutions. A reputation for expertise on aspects of teacher education (for example, research on student teaching) is also a source of influence.

9. **Participation in Decision Making About Change Should Be Extensive and Structured**
   Faculty participation in decision making is crucial to successful change. So is the way that participation occurs. There must be regular opportunities for anyone interested to be heard, but tasks should be formalized and assigned to one or more committees, with specific timelines for results. The members of effective committees are seldom determined by voting or by formal position, but are chosen by formal leaders based upon expertise, influence within the faculty, and representation of conflicting views and priorities. However, effective committees, while they need to grapple with different views, typically are not balanced so that all views are equally represented. The procedures for faculty participation need to be maintained through the implementation phases because consensus on goals and specific changes often breaks down as proposals are implemented.

Agenda for Further Action

State policies aimed at improving the education of teachers have been essentially regulatory. That is, they have specified what should be taught, admission standards into education programs, and qualifications for certification. State policies and other external pressures are motivating some changes in the education of teachers in colleges and universities in SREB states.

Few policymakers, however, will be satisfied if the improvements in teacher education are limited merely to those required by law or system policies. The problem with relying on regulation as the primary means for inducing change is that it does not change the capabilities of institutions or individuals, and its capacity to motivate is largely limited to those standards that can be defined easily or simplistically and enforced readily.

Directions for Public Policy

What then can policymakers do beyond what has already been done? How do policymakers move beyond regulation to reform driven by institutional leaders who really want to bring about substantive improvement in the preparation of teachers? The blending of top-down/bottom-up strategies is not an easy task, but recent research suggests that both are essential for significant improvement. The fact that states such as North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia have major statewide projects to encourage curricular reform is a signal that major change may be underway. These states are moving beyond the initial standards to bring about curricular change within four-year undergraduate teacher education programs. The most far-reaching change appears to be the requirement of a disciplinary or interdisciplinary major based in the liberal arts for all prospective teachers. This requirement will have the most sweeping impact on the

preparation of elementary, middle school, and special education teachers. Most secondary teachers already earn an academic major or its equivalent, but only a few institutions have such a requirement for prospective teachers in other fields.

A statewide effort to strengthen the preparation of teachers through a process that secures commitment by college and university leaders, especially presidents, is needed in every SREB state. Because of implications beyond campuses in policy decisions that affect quality, cost, effectiveness, and supply of teachers, statewide efforts should provide general direction but call for campus-developed changes.

Urgency for Action by College and University Leaders

Notable actions have been taken by the states and by campus leaders and faculty. These actions should be commended. Thus far state mandates are seen by campus leaders as the most significant developments in teacher education. The most important result of these mandates has been to raise the standards for entrance into teacher education programs and for certification. That these mandates and actions are seen as the most significant change to date indicates that the really hard work lies ahead for most campuses. Changing the way teachers are educated—patterns have been much the same for at least 25 years—is going to require new commitment within the colleges and universities in the SREB states.

The SREB study shows that too few campus leaders have given any substantial and sustained attention to the education of teachers. Some creative campus leaders are using the opportunities for change to involve arts and sciences as well as education faculty in rethinking how teachers are educated. College and university leaders must set the climate for curriculum change in the education of teachers. Central administrators can promote campus-wide involvement through use of incentives and resources. Too often, the organizational structures in place, for example, teacher education councils, do not promote needed change. In fact, they may inhibit change. Continued leadership and assessment of results will be needed throughout the change process, including the implementation phase, if institutions and states are to move beyond the initial stages of improving the preparation of teachers.